

How to Become a Published Author, Represent One, and Protect Your Client's Film and TV Rights

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Topics (1)

- How to choose a book concept with publishing potential
- How to create unique storytelling ideas
- Tips about writing skills necessary to be published

Topics (2)

- A roadmap of the publishing industry including the differences between
 - traditional publishers
 - subsidy publishers
 - internet/traditional self-publishing
 - print-on-demand
 - e-book publishing

Topics (3)

- How to locate legitimate literary agents and publishers
- Should an author submit a manuscript or query letter/book proposal to literary agents and publishers?
- What are the components of a professionally written query letter and book proposal?

Topics (4)

- What is the outline of a contract between an author and a literary agent or publisher?
- How can the author or the attorney representing an author protect against unfair advances, royalties, restrictions on future publications, promotion clauses requiring author contributions, and so forth?

Topics (5)

- What reference sources should the attorney consult so as to properly advise a literary client?
- How to protect your client's film and TV rights

Book Publishing Formula

- Unique book idea
 - + Great writing
 - + Well-defined publishing Strategy
-

= Optimization to become published

Book Contents

- Step #1 – Analyze the Publishing Industry to Gain Confidence
- Step #2 – Write a Story You Are Passionate About – But One That Is Marketable
- Step #3 – Your Passport to Publication Is Good Writing
- Step #4 – There Is No One Right Way to Tell a Story, But There Is a Best Way

Book Contents

- Step #5 – Preparing an Outline Is a Blueprint for Success
- Step #6 – Traditional Publishing Is a Writer’s Best Friend
- Step #7 – Market the Query Letter and Book Proposal, Not the Book
- Step #8 – Write a Query Letter Second-to-None

Book Contents

- Step #9 – The Author’s Duty — Book Promotion and Marketing Campaigns
- Step #10 – Book Contracts — Protecting Your Literary Legal Rights (and Your Client’s)

Step #1—Analyze the Publishing Industry to Gain Confidence

- Visit chain bookstores or independent outlets to research the book industry. Know who the “Big Four” are and all publishers large, medium and small.
- Check book covers, inside jackets, and Acknowledgments for publisher, author, agent, and editor information.

Step #1—Analyze the Publishing Industry to Gain Confidence

- Compile lists of agents, editors, and publishers that may be interested in the author or poet's genre of book.
- Review publishing industry reference publications but rely mostly on ***PublishersLunch*** at

<https://lunch.publishersmarketplace.com/>

Step #1—Analyze the Publishing Industry to Gain Confidence

- Consider attending the annual BookExpo America convention or other regional book conventions so as to gain a working knowledge of the publishing industry.
- What are alternative book topics you may write about and how to choose the best one.

Step #2—Write a Story You Are Passionate About—One That Is Marketable

- Hone skills by writing and publishing blog postings, op-ed's, short stories, magazine articles, newspaper articles, essays, short poems, etc. to build your credential.
- Study daily postings on [PublishersLunch](#) to discover trends; what is selling; who is buying, etc.

Step #2—Write a Story You Are Passionate About—One That Is Marketable

- Consider whether fiction or non-fiction is more marketable using 5%/95% rule.
- Research the genre and category of the book being contemplated to discover similar books and how the one being written is unique.

Step #2—Write a Story You Are Passionate About—One That Is Marketable

- Broaden the scope of the book to attract a strong potential audience.
- Consider collaboration for a first book.
- Choose a book subject with a built-in promotion.
- Ask “Why am I the one person in the world best qualified to write this book?”

Checklist to Evaluate the Merit of a Book Concept

1. Is the subject matter of the book unique?
2. Are you passionate about writing this book?
3. Can you describe your book concept in fifteen words or less, preferably less?
4. Is there broad readership for the book?

Checklist to Evaluate the Merit of a Book Concept

5. Why are you the one person in the world who should write this book?
6. Is there a built-in audience for the book?
7. Do you have a unique slant on a subject matter?
8. Is the book promotable?

Checklist to Evaluate the Merit of a Book Concept

9. Can you name five successful books similar to yours?
10. Why is your book unique?
11. Does the book cover a timely subject?
12. Does your book provide the answer to a question or solve a problem? (Agents and Publishers seek books providing solutions.)

Checklist to Evaluate the Merit of a Book Concept

13. Can you link the release of the book to an anniversary of an event of note to aid promotion?
14. Is the book about a notable subject?
15. Do you have a unique credential or “platform” from which to write the book?

Checklist to Evaluate the Merit of a Book Concept

16. Do you have a competent game plan to promote the book?
17. Can you convince a literary agent or publisher your book will sell more than 5,000 copies or more?
18. To gain insight into whether your book is publisher, hire a well-qualified literary consultant.

Checklist to Evaluate the Merit of a Book Concept

Tip—

Answers to these questions permit you to evaluate the potential success of your initial book. Be objective, and if your concept doesn't appear to be meritorious, consider another book topic. Perhaps the initial one will become a future book once you are established as a published author.

Step #3—Your Passport to Publication Is Good Writing

- Read the classics to understand good writing.
- Keep an “idea book” of word usage.
- Don’t overwhelm the reader with “high brow” language.
- Read *Elements of Style*—then re-read it. Keep a list of language “Dos” and “Don’ts.”

Step #3—Your Passport to Publication Is Good Writing

- Read self-help books on proper use of punctuation.
- Discover a writing regiment that works.
- Remember, good writing is clear and concise.
- After beginning to write a manuscript or collection of poetry, don't stop until the first draft is completed.

Step #3—Your Passport to Publication Is Good Writing

- Rewrite and edit. Every time a re-write occurs, the text is better.
- Solicit objective critique of writings..
- Remember—there may not be a “right” word to use, but there is a “best” word.
- Consider employing a “writing consultant” with an objective viewpoint.

Keys to Excellent Writing Skills

- Project visual images
- Strong word choice
- Emphasize clarity
- Good pacing
- Show, not tell
- Smooth transitions
- Be dramatic

Keys to Excellent Writing Skills

- Few adverbs/adjectives
- Be brief
- Few clichés, if any
- Proper punctuation and grammar
- Solicit critique

and...

- **Edit, edit, and re-edit**

Step #4—There Is No One Right Way to Tell a Story, But There Is a Best Way

- Remember—Good stories contain a terrific beginning, middle, and an end.
- Research storytelling techniques to provide alternatives.
- Choose a storytelling sequence that immediately captures the attention of the reader.

Step #4—There Is No One Right Way to Tell a Story, But There Is a Best Way

- When considering storytelling alternatives, ask the question—what is the message I am conveying?
- Great stories are well-paced and keep readers asking for more.
- Remember, there is no one *right* way to tell a story, but there is a *best* way.
- Remember—Every good story is a love story.

Keys to Superb Storytelling

- Creative story ideas
- Clever theme/message
- Every story has beginning, middle, end
- Best writing – prologue, chapter 1
- Best writing -- chapter beginning, end

Keys to Superb Storytelling

- Unique, likeable characters
- Captivating dialogue and descriptions
- Write non-fiction like fiction

Step #5—Preparing an Outline Is a Blueprint for Success

- The outline is the blue print of the mind.
- Writing without an outline inhibits the writing process.
- When researching facts, check the validity of the source.
- Interviewing is an art—be a good listener.
- Continually check the outline during the writing process to make certain you are on track.

Step #6—Traditional Publishing Is the Writer's Best Friend

- Research alternative means of book publishing.
 1. Traditional publishing (hardcover, paperback, audio, ebook)
 2. Traditional self-publishing (Amazon Direct Kindle, Ingram Spark)
 3. Print-on-demand
 4. Vanity press/Subsidy press

Step #6—Traditional Publishing Is the Writer's Best Friend

- Beware of Subsidy Publishers or other non-traditional publishers who promise distribution to major bookstores and libraries.
- Instead of Subsidy Publishers, consider Traditional Self-Publishing alternatives including Create Space and Ingram Spark.

Step #6—Traditional Publishing Is the Writer's Best Friend

- When searching for literary agents, consider subscribing to *PublishersLunch* at <https://lunch.publishersmarketplace.com/>

Step #6—Traditional Publishing Is the Writer's Best Friend

- Beware of literary agents who request payment in advance for their services.
- Once you have compiled a list of likely agents and publishers, check guidelines to see what form of submission is required.

Traditional Book Publishing Chart

Author/Poet



Idea



Fiction / Non-fiction / Poetry



Book Outline



Traditional Book Publishing Chart (2)

Manuscript or Collection of Poetry



Query letter and book proposal



Line editing



Traditional Book Publishing Chart (3)



Literary agent or book publisher



Publishing book



CELEBRATION!!!!

Step #7—Market the Query Letter and Book Proposal – Not the Book

- Remember, most literary agents and publishers will not read manuscripts.
- Essential Book Proposal components include the Title, Tagline (fifteen words or less describing the book), Author or Poet Biography, Book Audience, Book Outline, and Sample Chapters.

Step #7—Market the Query Letter and Book Proposal – Not the Book

- Search best seller lists in *USA Today*, *Publisher's Weekly*, or the *New York Times* for suggested taglines.
- Research correct book proposal form.
- Don't boast about the book in the book proposal. Show agents and publishers why it is outstanding and must be published.

Book Proposal Format

- Times New Roman font
- Loose leaves for easy copying (No stapling)
- No more than 30 pages long

Book Proposal Format

Cover Page

Book Title (24 or 36 font – bold)

Book Subtitle (18 or 24 font – bold)

Author or Poet (18 or 24 font – bold)

Book Proposal Format

Page Two

Quote from book or authority

(single-spaced and 14 font)

Source

(12 font)

Book Proposal Format

Page/Section Three

- Continuous components with no page break
- Double-spaced except for the Tagline and the description section of the Outline
- Font size 12 except for the headings in 14 bold

Book Proposal Format

Page/Section Three

Title of Book (18 font – bold)

Tagline or “Hook for the Book”

- 15 words or less
- Single-spaced, 12 font
- Show the literary agent or editor what the book or collection of poetry is about

Book Proposal Format

Synopsis (fiction/poetry) or **Overview** (non-fiction)

- Synopsis—plot, characters, beginning, middle, and end, 6-10 pages showing the literary agent or editor what the story is about
- Poetry—provide the theme of the poetry collection
- Overview—information provided about the subject, beginning, middle, and end, 6-10 pages showing the literary agent or editor what the book is about

Book Proposal Format

Author Biography

- Key words to begin biography:

The author's (or poet's) expertise to write this book stems from _____.

Book Proposal Format

Author Biography

- Provide academic credentials, personal information, and publishing credits, if any.
- Answer this question: **Why are you the one person in the world to write this book?**

Book Proposal Format

Book Audience

- Provide information as to who is the target audience for the book.
- The broader the audience, the better.
- Remember, 75% of people who purchase books are women.

Book Proposal Format

Book Audience

- Key words to begin this section:

The target audience for [*name of book*] is

_____.

Book Proposal Format

Similar Successful Books

- What successful books or collections or poetry are similar to yours
- **Why is yours unique or better?**
- If there are none, why will yours be successful?

Book Proposal Format

Similar Successful Books

- Key words to begin this section:

[name of book] is written in the spirit of such best-selling books as _____, _____, and _____, but *[name of book]* is unique because _____.

Book Proposal Format

Promotion Ideas

- Why are you and your book promotable?
- What unique ideas do you have to promote the book? See Step #9
- Remember—Literary agents and editors love a built-in audience.

Book Proposal Format

Format/Manuscript Status (Optional)

- Provide reader with storytelling sequence and whether manuscript is completed or will be completed within x months of contract

Book Proposal Format

Book-to-Film

- If you believe your book can become a film, show why by using examples of successful films that feature your subject matter.

Book Proposal Format

Book Outline

- Provide chapter headings (14 font) and three to four lines describing the subject matter of each chapter (single-spaced, 12 font).
- Poetry—Provide names of poems and brief description.

Book Proposal Format

Sample Text

- Provide one to three chapters (usually the prologue, if any, and chapters one and two) depending on length.
- The writing should be superb.
- No grammatical or punctuation mistakes permitted.

Book Proposal Format

Appendix

- Include any pertinent information (media clippings, photographs, etc.) you believe the literary agent or editor should know to assist promotion and marketing of you or the book.

Step #8—Write a Query Letter

Second to None

- Literary agents (or publishers) expect to receive professionally written one-page query letters normally through website templates.
- A query letter should be concise and targeted to hook the reader on the book concept.

Step #8—Write a Query Letter

Second to None

Paragraph	Query Letter Format
1st	Tagline/Hook for the book
2nd	Book description (F) Plot, characters, action, climax, ending (NF) Problem, solution, other information about book
3rd	Author platform

Step #8—Write a Query Letter

Second to None

Paragraph	Query Letter Format
4th	Book target audience
5th	Similar successful books
6th	Promotion ideas including viral marketing
7th	Closing remarks -- may include reference to agent/author representation

Step #8—Write a Query Letter Second to None

- Close with:

Thank you for considering the enclosed book proposal.
A manuscript is available upon request.

Sample Query Letters

In packet:

- [The Reporter Who Knew Too Much](#)
- [Courage in the Face of Evil](#)
- [Punch Book Series](#)

Remember – Rejection Is Not a Part of the Writer's Vocabulary

- Reaction to creative writing is subjective—don't be offended by criticism.
- Use rejection as inspiration, not a sign of failure.
- Learn from critical feedback, and don't give up.
- Remember, it only takes one traditional publisher to say “yes.”
- Use the story of the *Chicken Soup* books as a reminder to persevere.

Step #9—The Author's Duty – Book Promotion and Marketing Campaigns

- Remember, the author is expected to lead promotion efforts.
- Work with publishers regarding promotion opportunities.
- Be creative concerning promotion—do the unusual.

Step #9—The Author’s Duty – Book Promotion and Marketing Campaigns

- Schedule book signings so they are “event-oriented.”
- Check out best books on Book Publicity (<https://book-publicist.com/favorite-books-on-book-marketing/>)

Step #9—The Author's Duty – Book Promotion and Marketing Campaigns

Book Promotion Tools

1. Websites

- [Example 1](#)
 - <https://www.markshawbooks.com/>
- [Example 2](#)
 - <https://www.thereporterwhoknewtoomuch.com/>
- [Example 3](#)
 - <https://www.thedorothykilgallenstory.org/>

Step #9—The Author's Duty – Book Promotion and Marketing Campaigns

Book Promotion Tools

2. Videos (on YouTube)

- [Example 1](#)

- <https://tinyurl.com/yck99hm5>

- [Example 2](#)

- <https://tinyurl.com/4vbme2pp>

- [Example 3](#)

- <https://tinyurl.com/26s96fdb>

Step #9—The Author’s Duty – Book Promotion and Marketing Campaigns

Book Promotion Tools

3. Facebook
4. Twitter/Instagram
5. Author Blog (good to establish “author platform” – include in book proposal and query letter)
6. Radio, TV, podcast, print interviews
7. Booksignings

Step #10—Book Contracts— Protecting Your Literary Legal Rights

- Protect your writings—copyright through the Library of Congress.
- Remember the essential elements of a publishing contract—length of manuscript or collection of poetry, revisions, photographs, free books/purchased books, next book, final approvals, delivery date.

Step #10—Book Contracts— Protecting Your Literary Legal Rights

- Obtain professional advice through a literary agent or entertainment attorney regarding agency or publishing contract.
- Consider *Law and Authors: A Legal Handbook for Writers* by Jacqueline D. Lipton (2020)
<https://tinyurl.com/y3pcry2f>

Protecting Your Client's Film and TV Rights

- Literary agency contract
- Publishing company contract including audiobook rights

(Samples in packet.)

Protecting Your Client's Film and TV Rights

Copyright 101

Protecting Your Client's Film and TV Rights – Copyright 101

- What is copyright?
- What types of work are NOT covered by copyright?
- Who owns the copyright to a work?
- When submitting a manuscript, what proof of copyright do you use?

Protecting Your Client's Film and TV Rights – Copyright 101

- How is a copyright obtained?
- How do I know who owns a copyright?
- What is the duration of a copyright?

Protecting Your Client's Film and TV Rights – Copyright 101

- What is copyright infringement?
- How do I get permissions from copyright holders?
- What is the fair use rule?
- What is the standard for invoking the fair use rule?

Protecting Your Client's Film and TV Rights – Copyright 101

- Where do I send request to use text from a book, magazine or article?
- What about material on the internet?
- What about photographs?
- What is in public domain?
- What's the smartest way to be safe with copyrighted material?

Protecting Your Client's Film and TV Rights

- Book media rights agreement
- Collaboration agreement
- Work for Hire agreement

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Repeat After Me...

I will be published!

Thank you.